



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Isiah Leggett
County Executive

Timothy L. Firestine
Chief Administrative Officer

January 28, 2011

Captain Michael Malanoski
Commanding Officer
Naval Support Activity-Bethesda
8901 Wisconsin Avenue
Bethesda, Maryland 20814
VIA EMAIL

Dear Captain Malanoski:

On behalf of the people of Montgomery County, I wish to express our appreciation to NSA Bethesda and the National Naval Medical Center for their cooperation in mitigating the impacts of BRAC-related growth on the surrounding community. Working in conjunction with the Navy and other federal partners, County and State transportation agencies are implementing projects that include short-term improvements to major intersections, construction of new and renovated sidewalks and bicycle paths, and enhancements to local and regional commuter bus service.

We particularly appreciate the Navy's proactive request for \$20 million in Defense Access Road (DAR) funds for a long-term project to improve access to the Medical Center Metro station. The purpose of this letter is to request your assistance in ensuring that this essential project can be completed in a timely fashion.

As you know, the Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) has been funding and conducting an environmental analysis, a process required under federal law for the expenditure of federal funds, for the MD 355/Rockville Pike Crossing Study. MCDOT and its numerous federal, state and regional partners including NSA-Bethesda have identified a Locally Preferred Alternative for this project, which consists of two major components – a shallow pedestrian tunnel between the Metro station and the South Wood Gate, and a bank of deep high-speed elevators at South Wood to the Metro platform – along with at-grade pedestrian safety and traffic operation enhancements. MCDOT hopes to receive approval from the Federal Highway Administration in the near future so that this project can move forward.

Unfortunately, the \$20 million DAR funding, which is the only funding available for this project, is insufficient to move the project to construction. My understanding is that the Navy's \$20 million DAR request was based on conceptual ideas designed prior to the initial Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) study of the Medical Center Metro station access issue in 2007 and MCDOT's 2010-2011 studies. MCDOT estimates that constructing just one of the two main components would cost approximately \$28 million. With the economic downturn and decreased revenues, neither Montgomery County nor the State of Maryland are able to contribute additional funds to this project.

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Therefore, as we approach the September 2011 implementation of the 2005 BRAC law, we look to you for further support for this project which cannot move forward without additional resources. This is a project that must be built. It directly serves the personnel, patients and family visitors to the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center who otherwise will be faced with untenable gridlock. Walter Reed should be known for the outstanding patient care it provides, not that its patients were denied timely access to care because of gridlock or unsafe access to or from the Metro station.

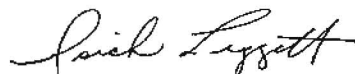
Today there are approximately 3,000 pedestrian crossings each day between the Metro station and the Navy campus. This number is expected to exceed 7,000 after BRAC is fully operational. The conflict between pedestrians and vehicles competing for access through Rockville Pike is a recipe for continuing gridlock and poses pedestrian safety challenges that can be avoided by implementation of the project. The Metro Crossing project will ameliorate this gridlock and substantially improve pedestrian and vehicular safety. Combined with the intersections projects being constructed by the State Highway Administration, traffic operations will be improved along MD 355/Rockville Pike in front of the military hospital.

In light of the pressing need to ensure timely access for patients and medical professionals to the new Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, I respectfully request that you take any appropriate actions to include an additional \$8 million for the MD 355/Rockville Pike project in the Department of Defense budget for FY2012. I know this request comes at a time when the Department of Defense is facing budget reductions, but this is a project of tremendous need to active, wounded and retired military personnel, their visitors, and the staff and personnel who work at your facility.

Our uniformed personnel must have proper access to the newly designated crown jewel of military medicine at the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda. Please let me know whatever assistance I can offer you in the effort to secure additional federal funding for this project.

Again, I thank you for your ongoing support for our uniformed personnel and for your service to our country.

Sincerely,



Isiah Leggett
County Executive

cc: Hon. Barbara A. Mikulski
Hon. Benjamin L. Cardin
Hon. Chris Van Hollen